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DAYBREAK:

AN EASTER POEM.

BY
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NEW YORK :
ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & COMPANY
900 BROADWAY, COR. 20th STREET.

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DAYBREAK :

AN EASTER POEM.

MARY MAGDALENÈ,
At the break of day,
Wan with tears and watching,
Hasted on her way ;

Bearing costly spices,
Myrrh, and sweet perfume,
Through the shadowy garden
To the Master's tomb.

Slowly broke the gray dawn :
On her head the breeze
Shook a rain of dew-drops
From the cypress trees.

Rose and lily parted
As to let her pass,
And the violets blessed her
From the tender grass.

Little heed she paid them ;
Christ, the Lord, was dead ;
All at last was over,
All at last was said.

What of hope remainèd ?
Black against the sky,
Calvary's awful crosses
Stretched their arms on high !

Mary Magdalenè
Made her bitter moan :—
“ From the sealèd sepulchre
Who shall roll the stone ? ”

Swift she ran, her spirit
Filled with awe and fear;
Wide the door stood open
As her feet drew near!

All the place was flooded
With a radiance bright;
Forth into the darkness
Streamed a holy light.

Down she stooped, and peering
The dread tomb within,
Saw a great white angel
Where the Lord had been!

Sore she cried affrighted—
Who had betrayed him?—
“They have taken away my Lord!
Where have they laid Him?”

“Nay,” the shining angel
Calmly smiling said,—
“Why seek ye the living
Down among the dead?”

“He is not here, but risen!”
All her soul stood still;
Through her trembling pulses
Ran a conscious thrill.

“Mary!”—said a low voice;—
“Rabboni!” answered she.
Then life was brought to light
And immortality!

Mary Magdalenè,
First of woman born
To see the clear light streaming
O’er the hills of morn;

First to hail the Lord Christ,
 Conqueror of Death,
 First to bow before Him
 With abated breath ;

First to hear the Master
 Say,—“ From Death’s dark prison,
 From its bonds and fetters,
 Lo ! I have arisen !

“ Now to God, my Father,—
 Mine and yours,—I go ;
 And because I live
 Ye shall live also ! ”—

Didst thou grasp the meaning ?—
 Know that Death was dead ?
 That the seed of woman
 Had bruised the serpent’s head ?

Didst thou know Messiah
The gates of hell had broken,
And life unto its captives
Once for all had spoken?

Oh! through all the ages,
Every son of man,
Be he slave or monarch,
Born to bliss or ban,—

Lord, or prince, or peasant,
Jester, sage, or seer,
Wife, or child, or mother,
Priest, or worshipper,—

Through the grave's lone portals
Soon or late had passed,
But no sign or token
Back to earth had cast!

In Ramah was a voice heard
 Sounding through the years,—
 Rachel for her children
 Pouring sighs and tears ;

Rizpah for her slain sons
 Woful vigils keeping ;
 David for young Absalom
 In the chamber weeping !

All earth's myriad millions
 To their dead had cried,
 Empty arms outreaching
 In the silence wide,

Yet from out the darkness
 Came nor word, nor sound,
 As the long ranks vanished
 In the black profound—

Came no word till Mary
Heard the Angel say,—
“Christ the Lord is risen ;
The Lord Christ lives to-day !”

From the empty sepulchre
Streamed the Light Divine ;
Grave, where is thy victory?—
Where, O Death, is thine ?

Mary Magdalenè,
Hope is born again ;
Clear the Day-star rises
To the eyes of men.

Lo ! the mists are fleeing !
Shine, O Olivet,
For the crown of promise
On thy brow is set !

Lift your heads, ye mountains !

Clap your hands, ye hills !

Into rapturous singing

Break, ye murmuring rills !

Shout aloud, O forests !

Swell the song, O seas !

Wake, resistless ocean,

All your symphonies !

Wave your palms, O tropics !

Lonely isles, rejoice !

O ye silent deserts,

Find a choral voice !

Winds, on mighty trumpets,

Blow the strains abroad,

While each star in heaven

Hails its risen Lord !

“Alleluia! Alleluia!”—

How the voices ring!

“Alleluia! Alleluia!”

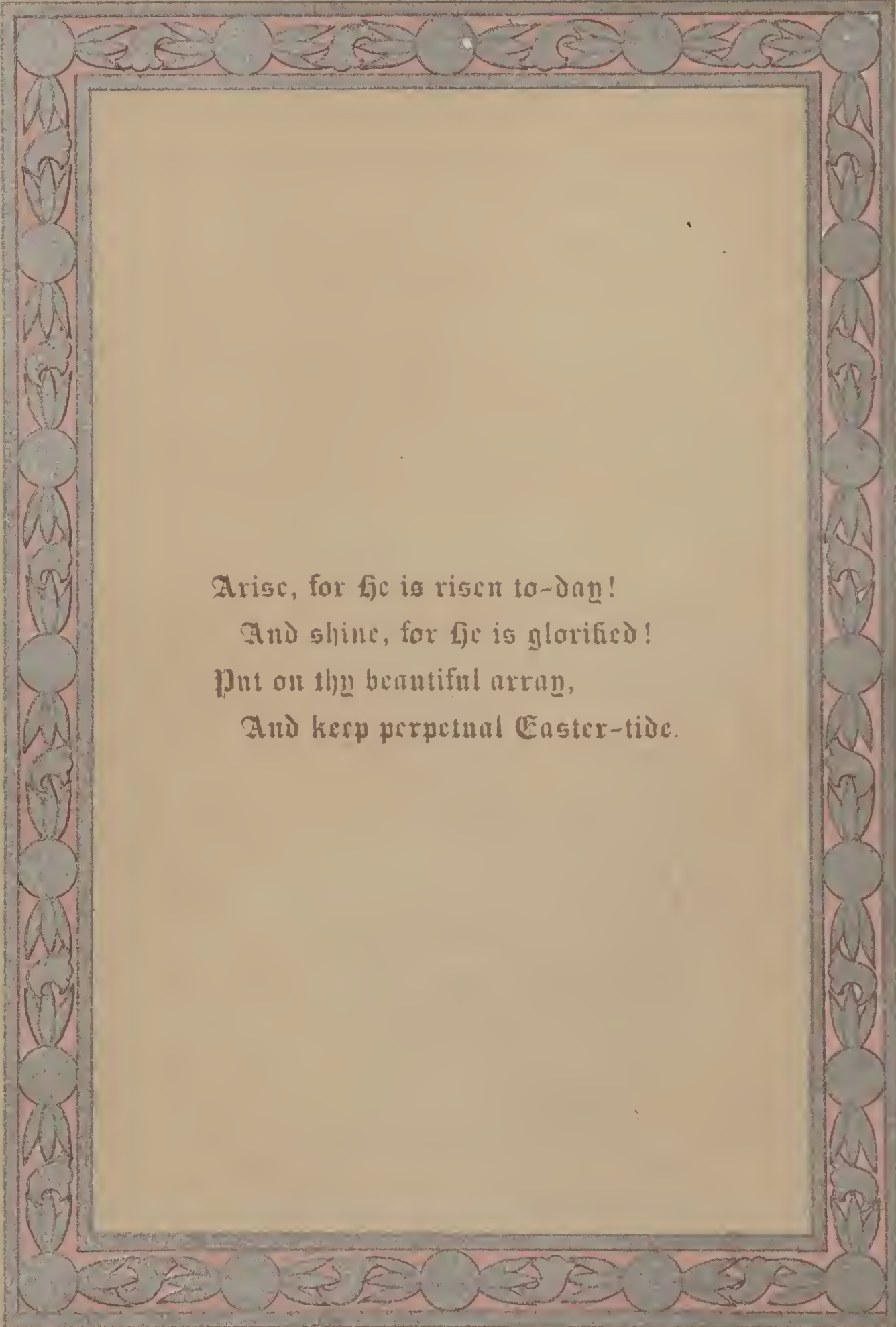
Earth and heaven sing!

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Chant His praise alway!

From the sealèd sepulchre

Christ is risen to-day!



Arise, for He is risen to-day!
And shine, for He is glorified!
Put on thy beautiful array,
And keep perpetual Easter-tide.

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